

***Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park
Federal Advisory Commission Meeting***

March 21, 2013

Middletown Town Hall
Middletown, Virginia

- 1) General Introductions
- 2) Welcome/Introductory Remarks
Jim Northup
- 3) Welcome/Introductory Remarks
Amy Bracewell
- 4) Update—Visitor Contact Station
Eric Campbell
- 5) Update—Park Signage and Graphic Identity Standards
Eric Campbell
- 6) Update—Development of Unigrid Brochure
Amy Bracewell
- 7) Looking to the Future—Working Relationship between the NPS and the Cedar
Creek and Belle Grove NHP Advisory Commission
Patrick Farris and Jim Northup

Meeting Notes

Commission members in attendance: Jim Northup, Designated Federal Official (DFO); John Adamson, Belle Grove, Inc.; Carl Bernhards, Middletown; Katie Donahue, USFS; Patrick Farris, Warren County and chair; Jeanne Frink, Commonwealth of Virginia; Stanley M. Hirschberg, Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation; Eric Lawrence, Frederick County; Rob Nieweg, National Trust for Historic Preservation; Nicholas Picerno, Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation; Rick Redmon, Strasburg; and Pam Sheets, Shenandoah County

Commission member absent: Mary Bowser, private landowner

Others in attendance: Eric Campbell, NPS; Bob Grogg, NPS volunteer; Elizabeth McClung, Belle Grove, Inc.; Dave Stegmaier, District Office, U.S. Representative Frank Wolf

Chair Patrick Farris opened the meeting at 8:38 a.m. Farris asked that everyone present give their name and affiliation.

Jim Northup, superintendent of Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park and Shenandoah National Park thanked everyone for coming to the commission meeting and expressed thanks to John Adamson, Elizabeth McClung, and Rob Nieweg for the reception at Belle Grove for Amy Bracewell and him on March 18, 2013.

Northup began expressing that it is an honor and privilege to be superintendents of these two parks. He stressed that this was a sincere statement; it was not formulaic. Northup gave a brief biography: born in Bethesda, Maryland, graduated from Walt Whitman high School and from the University of Maryland. His first NPS position was as seasonal at Shenandoah National Park in 1979. He has worked at Cape Hatteras NS, Buffalo NR, Fire Island NS, Grand Teton NP, Big Bend NP, Grand Canyon NP, Guadalupe Mountains NP, Great Smokies NP, and most recently as superintendent at Pictured Rocks NL. He worked up through the ranger ranks; he is not a historian nor a Civil War scholar. He and his wife, Phyllis, have two daughters.

He thanked Eric Campbell and the staff for their work during the transition from Diann Jacox's retirement to his and Amy Bracewell's arrival. He also acknowledged the tremendous amount of work that the commission members had put into the General Management Plan, noting that the work was an important step in making the park and the partnership a cohesive whole.

Northup then addressed the recent past, stating his awareness of the concerns about the realignment, how it was handled, and the anger, frustration, and missteps in communication that grew out of the efforts. He stressed how important it is for Amy and himself that they work with the commission and the park staff to realize the common aims, goals, and aspirations that everyone shares in regard to the park.

He talked briefly about the realignment: This is not a merger. Cedar Creek and Shenandoah are two very different parks. The staff, budget, and mission remain separate, but he will work with Amy to ensure that when needed collaboration will be the norm of how they work, enlisting the services of Shenandoah's cultural resources, IT, etc. Amy will be the day-to-day manager, asking for cooperation when needed and Northup will make that work. Northup will also meet with the key partners, and the park will move forward on all projects under NPS leadership. There is much to learn, much to do, and it is important not to lose momentum.

Amy Bracewell, site manager of Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park spoke about her excitement being here. She has come here from Mount Rushmore NM, a park with a small staff where she learned to do many different things. She holds degrees

in art history and cultural resource management. She is looking for ways to raise awareness of the park, of its stories, about its partners, and how to be useful to all.

Eric Campbell talked about the visitor contact station (VCS). The final bits of work are being completed, and the unofficial opening will be near the middle of April. An official opening will follow, but that date is dependent on Congressman Frank Wolf's schedule. Shannon Moeck has signed up about 27 volunteers to staff the VCS with two days of training for the volunteers scheduled for April 4–5, 2013.

Patrick Farris commented on how gratifying it is to see this project come to reality. Rob Nieweg commented that he hoped that the “official” opening would be an occasion to raise awareness for all on what the park is becoming.

Campbell continued on to talk about the latest developments on the signage. He has received comments back from VDOT on what can and cannot be done, based on VDOT's regulations. Campbell circulated handouts showing VDOT's review of the signs that will be placed on I-66 and U.S. 11. Site specific signs that will not be in the VDOT right-of-way will be dealt with in the near future.

Since the site specific signs are dependent upon coming to a consensus of a design approach more work needs to be done. Nieweg urged that we not let this project falter, but continue to move forward. Northup suggested perhaps a design charette might be a vehicle for moving the project forward so that at the September FAC meeting the commissioners could have proposals to review and come to a final decision.

Campbell and Bracewell talked about the park brochure. The HFC team is returning to talk about the layout and the approach so that they can produce a new concept. Though this means the publication will not be ready according to the original schedule, it will be produced, printed, and delivered well before the 150th commemoration in 2014.

The remainder of the meeting was taken up talking about the future workings of the partners, the commission, and the park staff. Northup began by saying that he was going to review the bylaws and check on the terms of individual members, renewing those that needed to be renewed, and looking for new members if needed. He also said that the commission should look at the terms of the elected officers and schedule an election if needed. Northup also stated that he will be the designated federal official on the commission.

Northup talked about the nature of the commission as it moves into having a new person as the park superintendent. The challenge is to ensure collaboration and to strengthen the advisory process, assess threats to the park, and encourage a sense of ownership and pride in the park's future for those who live within the park boundaries and for those in the adjacent areas.

Stan Hirschberg stated that he believed that the FAC was ignored during the realignment process, but that it is time now for a new beginning. He appreciated the candor with

which Northup addressed the issues arising from the realignment. Rob Nieweg said that he believed—and hoped—that everyone could do better. Elizabeth McClung cited the example of the new bridge on U.S. 11 as an example where the FAC and key partners could work to ensure preservation of the landscape and to provide for pedestrian access.

Other Business

Jeanne Frink reported that the I-81 caucus of ten Valley state legislators has been formed to address and monitor VDOT's planning and proposals for widening I-81 from West Virginia to Tennessee. Pam Sheets reported that the status of I-81 is a standing partners' agenda item. Rick Redmon added that rail alternatives and the Corridor H route also need to be included.

The notes from the December meeting were approved as presented.

There was no old or new business.

The next meeting will be June 20, 2013, at the Warren County Government Center at 8:30 a.m.

Chair Patrick Farris adjourned the meeting at 10:14 a.m.

Handouts

Agenda

VDOT Sign Directive